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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses three categories of languages in post-apartheid South Africa: high-status, low-status, and endangered. The first section presents demolinguistic profiles and their representation in the media, offering data on the relative numerical importance of the main languages used in South Africa and the average and proportional allocation at three South African Broadcasting Corporation stations in 1996. The second section examines the sociolinguistic status of South Africa's languages, noting the processes that shaped language policy and attitudes during the past 50 years. The third section discusses language in education, explaining that most educators in South Africa continue to think of the indigenous African languages as impediments to be overcome on the way to mastering the English language. The fourth section describes prospects for African languages in South Africa and its education system. The paper concludes that a series of language planning steps is necessary to ensure that the theoretically unchallengeable policy positions of the new South Africa are realized. Recommendations include large scale generalized critical language awareness campaigns, multilingual or bilingual signposts and nameboards for all government buildings and roads, and large-scale training for interpreters, translators, journalists, media practitioners, and teachers. (SM)

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Majority and minority languages in South Africa

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As an object of comparison concerning the challenge posed by language issues in the European Union, the post-apartheid Republic of South Africa is useful both because there are generic similarities between the language situation there and in Europe and because the two situations are so very different. Such a comparison can serve to highlight the differences and thus to clarify the strategic and policy implications of specific choices.

To begin with conceptual and terminological questions: in South Africa, for reasons that will become apparent presently, we prefer not to speak of majority and minority languages. We have constructed a simple typology consisting of a gradient of three categories, i.e. 'high-status', 'low-status', and 'endangered' languages. The main reason for this approach and for the explicit avoidance of the terminology of 'majority' and 'minority' languages is political and ideological. Because of the immediate apartheid past and the conscious strategy of promoting national unity ('nation building'), we are wary of giving or strengthening the impression that the present government operates from the premise that some languages are intrinsically more important or more valuable than others. The terminology we prefer indicates clearly that the languages are viewed within a historical perspective, one which involves centrally colonial conquest, racial and other forms of domination, including linguistic discrimination. In other words, we imply essentially that this is an inherited situation that must change in favour of what are loosely called 'marginalised' languages, including South African Sign Language (SASL).

A second reason why the terminology is different is that - as with so many other things - apartheid, specifically, and racism more generally, turned everything upside-down. Thus, even though Afrikaans and English are the languages of arithmetic minorities, they are the dominant languages and manifest all the features of what are generally referred to by sociolinguists and sociologists of language as 'majority' languages. And, conversely, the demographically strong indigenous African lan-

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guages, especially isiXhosa and isiZulu, though, together, they are spoken as a first language by almost one-half of the population of South Africa and between 60% and 70% of all South Africans understand isiZulu, manifest all the features of 'minority' languages in the typical West European country. This is so because, for reasons of the peculiar history of South Africa, the speakers of the African languages have, until recently, constituted social minorities; they are at present undertaking the painful attempt to free themselves from this situation and from the stigma that goes with it.

The matter is further complicated by the fact that Afrikaner, i.e. white Afrikaans-speaking intellectuals who consider themselves to be part of an ethnic group, insist on using what for our purposes I refer to as the Eurocentric terminology. Consequently, they see Afrikaans as a 'minority' language but, curiously, do not seem to realise that they are treating English as a 'majority' language even though it is spoken as a first language by under 9% of the population of South Africa. This view at the very least implies a different (consociational) notion of democratic consensus from the majoritarian notion to which the present government is committed, in that the thinkers and strategists of the core Afrikaner community make it clear that their respect for and acceptance of the constitution is dependent on the extent to which it effectively assuages the fears of 'minorities' about language and culture. This is the main reason why the right wing under General Viljoen, the leader of the Freedom Front, during the last hours of the negotiations insisted on the establishment of an ethnically defined forum where such issues could be discussed and resolved. Whether this will happen in practice is indeed one of the crucial outstanding questions of contemporary South Africa.

Since 1994 especially, the question of immigrant minority languages, as understood in Europe, has been latent as a 'problem' since millions of people have been surging towards South Africa in search of better opportunities or because of the impossible conditions in their war-torn countries. Although it is still too early to speak of a consolidated or definitive policy in this regard, there is no doubt that the authorities in practice have tended towards a policy of neglect at best and, at worst, what one can only describe as a xenophobic policy (see Plueddemann, 1999). For those who are fortunate enough to speak one of the many cross-border languages that connect South Africa with its neighbours, there is in principle no problem since they can fit into existing schools in the townships and even in the rural areas.

These remarks are important for purposes of orientation since we will be appearing to be speaking generically of the same things whereas, in the South African situation, we have to bear in mind that we are looking at a mirror image of the typical West European country.

Demolinguistic profiles and their representation in the media

From Table 1, based on the 1996 census figures, we get an approximate idea of the relative order of numerical importance of each of the main home languages used in South Africa.

Table 1 Main home languages in South Africa (Source: Census 1996, http://www.stassa.gov.za/census96/HTML/CIB/Populstion)

	Numbers	*As %*
Zulu	9,200,144	22.9
Xhosa	7,196,118	17.9
Afrikaans	5,911,547	14.4
Pedi	3,695,846	9.2
English	3,457,467	8.6
Tswana	3,301,774	8.2
Sotho	3,104,197	7.7
Tsonga	1,756,105	4.4
Swati	1,013,193	2.5
Venda	876,409	2.2
Ndebele	586,961	1.5
Other	583,813	0.6
Total	40,583,573	100.0

Although English is spoken as a home language by less than 10% of the population of South Africa, the dominance of the English language becomes startlingly evident from an analysis of broadcast schedules of the South African Broadcasting Corporation for 1996. Table 2 gives an overview of the average and proportional language allocation from 6.00 - 24.00 o'clock at three SABC stations in 1996.

Table 2 Average and proportional language allocation at three SABC stations in 1996

	SABC 1	*SABC 2*	*SABC 3*	*Average*
English	65.08	59.61	95.26	73.32
Zulu	4.64	0.62	0.00	1.75
Xhosa	4.57	0.14	0.00	1.57
Afrikaans	3.53	14.06	0.14	5.91
Sepedi	2.70	3.72	0.00	2.14
Setswana	3.46	3.38	0.00	2.28
Sesotho	3.12	3.72	0.00	2.28
Setsonga	0.00	0.21	0.00	0.07
Seswati	0.21	0.00	0.00	0.07
XhiVenda	0.00	0.21	0.00	0.07
SiNdebele	0.21	0.00	0.00	0.07
Multilingual	12.49	14.34	4.60	10.48

Except for the fact that, because of pressure from organized Afrikaans groups and from the Freedom of Expression Institute, among others, the rapid diminution of broadcast time in Afrikaans has been halted and slightly reversed, the situation has remained much the same. There is no doubt that a strong case can be made for Afrikaans, even though a privately-funded Afrikaans TV channel will soon be operative as the Afrikaans elite cease looking towards government as the sole source of protection and promotion of the language. However, it is obvious that the really marginalized languages are the indigenous African languages taken together and Tshitsonga, Siswati, XiVenda and SiNdebele in particular. South African Sign Language did not even feature in the analysis at that time. In summary, almost three-quarters of all South African television programmes are broadcast in English. In actual fact, the proportion is much larger, since the rubric 'multilingual', which accounts for another 10%, in fact refers to programmes that are largely in English. Until dubbing and subtitling become feasible and economically possible (in terms of the SABC's logic), South African TV will remain essentially English, which is not to say that it is in any way 'good-quality' TV or that it is even understood by most people who watch it. But that, as we know, is a global problem.

These illustrations explain the situation on the ground better than any words could do. However, an even more telling datum is the fact that of all the complaints about alleged violations of language rights received by the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB) between 1 July 1998 and 30 June 1999, more than 95% were complaints against central government, provincial government and parastatal institutions. The vast majority of these emanated from Afrikaans-speaking individuals or institutions, usually against the unconstitutional or 'illegal' sole use of English as a means of communication by the relevant body with the public. Besides revealing possible lack of organization and political will on the part of the government and quasi-government agencies concerned, this datum reflects the level of organization of language communities and the corollary degree of passionate commitment to the protection and promotion of their specific language(s). As a result, the PANSALB Report, from which these facts are taken, concludes that '... there is a need for the PANSALB to educate people about their rights and improve its system of monitoring and attending to issues of language rights violations ...' (PANSALB, 1999: 30).

By way of correcting the perspective, it should be pointed out that the PANSALB is a watchdog organization the main 'target' of which is precisely the new government. It would be able to assist a member of the public to bring a suit of linguistic discrimination against another member of the public or against a private-sector organization but would not itself have the right to institute such action. In regard to government, on the other hand, it has considerable clout.

Radio, which is still the most widespread and most popular electronic medium, is the domain in which the multilinguality of South Africa really comes into its own and where the potential of the indigenous languages can be gauged accurately. It is a critically important fact that the popular state and community radio stations broadcast largely in these languages and that English (and Afrikaans) radio listenership simply cannot be compared with, for example, Zulu or Southern Sotho or Xhosa listenerships. This fact might constitute the launching pad for the eventual establishment of the African languages as languages of power in South Africa.

Sociolinguistic status of South Africa's languages

This question has to be examined against the background of the consequences of colonial conquest, slavery, migrant labour and apartheid. It is a very large question and there is a wealth of sociolinguistic and historical literature in which the processes of linguistic discrimination and underdevelopment in the southern African region are described from diverse perspectives (see, among others, Hirson, 1981; Alexander, 1989, 1992; Du Plessis & Du Plessis, 1987; Mesthrie, 1995).

In a nutshell, the processes that shaped language policy and attitudes during the past 50 years or so can be summed up as follows: under the National Party's Christian National Education policy of the Afrikanerisation of South African society, the African languages were deliberately developed as *Ausbau*-languages, i.e. even where it was possible in linguistic and political terms to allow the varieties of a particular language cluster or sub-group, such as the 'Nguni' group, to converge into a more embracing standard written form, they were systematically kept separate through lexical and other corpus-planning manoeuvres. The languages concerned were, moreover, starved of the essential resources in such a way that they could not be used in contexts that implied or demonstrated real power. General social and political policies ensured throughout the era of high apartheid that the African languages remained languages of low status. The apartheid governments gave the impression that they were doing their best to develop and to modernize the African languages when in fact they were underdeveloping them quite deliberately. With utmost cynicism, a mere sense of social progress (like special language boards for each of the African languages) was given in order to impress 'the international community' which was under the spell of the movement for African independence and liberation from colonial rule at the time.

Tragically, the anglocentrism of the political, and to some extent of the cultural, leadership of the oppressed people in effect, if not in intention, ensured the predictable outcome of these policies. For it is a fact of historic significance that the African (or black) nationalist movement because of the salience of the racial question did not react to cultural oppression in a manner similar to that of the Afrikaner (or white) nationalists. At the critical time when Bantu education was being imposed on the black people from the fifties to the seventies, the leadership of the liberation movement across the board made a *de facto* decision to oppose Afrikaans in favour of English. The option of promoting the African

languages while also ensuring as wide and as deep a knowledge of the English language was never considered seriously. In effect, therefore, the hegemony of English, its unassailable position - as Chinua Achebe calls it - became entrenched among black people. Because it was the only other language that could compete with Afrikaans as a means to power (jobs and status) and as the only means to international communication and world culture at the disposal of South Africa's elites, it became, as in other African countries, the 'language of liberation'.

The important point, however, is that because of the attitudes referred to and the lack of foresight on the part of the leadership, the resistance to the cultural-political policies of the National Party did not result in the kind of cultural movement for the development of the African languages which, in retrospect, was completely possible. Unlike the resistance manifested by the *Afrikaanse taalbewegings* (Afrikaans language movements) in response to the cultural-imperialist policies of Lord Milner at the beginning of the 20th century, the even cruder Milnerist policies of Dr Verwoerd and his brothers merely gave rise to a middle-class strategy of convenience and evasion, namely, the strategy of promoting or tolerating the sole value of English. While there was no policy of actually denigrating the African languages, there was also no deliberate and systematic attempt to develop, modernize and spread the knowledge of the indigenous languages both for the intrinsic empowering value of such an exercise and as an explicit strategy of cultural-political resistance.

In actual practice, the vast majority of South Africans do not at present have a sufficient command of the high status languages (English and Afrikaans) so that they can compete for well paid jobs and prestigious career options on a basis of equality with the 20% of the population who do have the requisite language skills. On the other hand, the language resources that the majority do have (most of the metropolitan and urban population can speak with high proficiency at least two - often radically different - African languages), are not validated in the market place. In other words, the indigenous languages are not accorded a status such that knowing them is of material or social benefit to the speaker outside the relevant speech community itself. This situation is made a thousand times worse by the fact that in South Africa, language and colour (or 'race') coincide to a very large extent because of the peculiar historical development of the labour market. Because of the legacy of Bantu education specifically, a general 'semilingualism' prevails and most of the youth have been handicapped in the merciless race for power, position and individual progress in the very competitive society in which we live.

Most people, naturally, want to acquire the kind of proficiency in English (and to a lesser extent, in Afrikaans) which will enable them to compete for well-paying jobs. They have what Kellman (1975) calls an instrumental, not a sentimental, allegiance to the English language. They value their own languages as community and home languages and as bearers of cultural identity, in general terms (urbanization has inexorably brought about a questioning of traditional values and notions of identity). The question of 'survival' of these languages does not arise. Except for the endangered Khoisan languages, none of the indigenous languages display any sign of lack of vitality. Afrikaans strategists and intellectuals raise the issue in terms of 'survival' (not vitality) simply because they insist (correctly in my view) that the constitutional obligation of equal treatment is being openly and deliberately flouted by people in government.

Of course, in linguistic terms, the crisis which all African people face, i.e. the 'powerlessness' of their languages, is acutely experienced by black South Africans. One of the derivative elements of the crisis is the lack of confidence most people have in the value of their first language (mother- or father tongue) which the total situation under apartheid produced. This is a very important aspect of the syndrome of the colonized mind. Most people really believe, for example, that the African languages 'do not have the words' for most modern objects and scientific concepts. As a result, they have come to believe that it is essential that they learn the English language so that they can overcome this 'deficit' of their languages. The resultant loss of self esteem and of a dignifying self image is fatal.

Language in education

In line with the mind set described above, most educators in South Africa continue to think of the indigenous African languages in the same way as - according to Lord Acton - the European mariners during the 'voyages of discovery' thought of the African continent, i.e. as an obstruction on the way to India. The African languages are, in this paradigm, seen as impediments that have to be 'overcome' on the way to mastery of the English language. Or, to change the metaphor: English is seen by most black South Africans and by the educators of their children as the pot of gold at the end of the linguistic rainbow.

It is necessary to stress that this remains true today in spite of the progressive, even radical, changes in language policy in education which have been made in the wake of the democratic elections of 1994. After 1976, when the militant intervention of the school children of South Africa forced language policy changes on the apartheid state from below, the real situation in the classrooms of the majority of the people was that their own languages were either not used as languages of teaching at all or, in most cases, were used for the first three or four years of initial literacy and then either dropped abruptly or gradually. With a fair proportion of exceptions, most of the teachers who are expected to teach their subjects through the medium of the English language, through no fault of their own, are not proficient in that language. This subtractive bilingualism approach was (and continues to be) an unmitigated disaster. Hardly any materials in the African languages exist beyond the junior primary (first three years) phase, most of the rest are not only inadequate in quality but have to be shared; very often a single copy has to make do for a whole class of forty and more children.

One of the most disturbing consequences of this situation, inherited from the apartheid period, is the fact that children are unable to read and write their mother tongues and, worse, they cannot read and write English (or Afrikaans) with any confidence either. Given this *de facto* illiteracy - at best semi-literacy - with which children emerge from the primary school (and this is still more than 60% of black South African children), it is no wonder that what we refer to as a 'culture of reading' is non-existent. This factor, in turn, means that there is no market for books and other publications in the indigenous languages and consequently no motivation for publishers to produce reading matter in these languages on a large scale. The vicious circle that has been set up is one of the most difficult sociocultural phenomena with which South Africa's educators and intelligentsia are confronted. Plueddemann (1999: 334) cites the 1991 statistics for book titles published in South Africa. Despite the fact that three-quarters of the population have an African language as their home language, only 15.8% of all book titles published in that year were in one or other of the nine main African languages of South Africa. As against this, English titles comprised almost one-half of all books published in the country although native English speakers comprise only 8.7% of the population and, we ought to add, virtually all imported titles are in English. Afrikaans, whose speakers comprise 15.7% of the population, accounted for 33.8% of the local book market.

A core of language specialists have during the past 15 years or so been working consistently to break through this barrier. Together with many other African social scientists they have come round to understanding the importance of developing the indigenous languages of the continent and of not steering their resource-hungry countries in the direction of teaching only the former colonial languages instead of the peoples' first languages. They have come to identify the optimal situation as that in which additive bilingualism/multilingualism involving, where appropriate, the former colonial language as one of the package of languages to be learned can become state policy because of the availability of resources and of political/strategic foresight on the part of the leadership. What has become ever more obvious is that it is true that no nation has ever thrived or reached great heights of economic and cultural development if the vast majority of its people are compelled to communicate in a second or even a third language. Prah (1993: 72-73) in an important work, goes as far as maintaining that the educational policies of post-colonial African governments which neglected the modernization and development of the indigenous languages are one of the main reasons for the abysmal failure of all economic development programmes on the continent. The colonial heritage of which the use and high status of the languages of the colonial masters are an integral part sets up a vicious circle in which

> African languages are underrated as possible vehicles of science and technological development. Because they have for decades been underrated, this has led to a retardation in their development and meant in consequence a retrenchment of African languages and cultures in the effort to develop Africa. This retardation implies stagnation and the confirmation of the inferior status of African languages and cultures in the general discourse on development in Africa. (Prah, 1993: 46).

This position is equally true of South Africa, in spite of the superficial appearance of technological modernity. Besides everything else, the lack of creativity, spontaneity and initiative that comes with people having to use a second, and even a third, language for participation in all the most important public domains predisposes the situation to becoming one that is characterized by failure and mediocrity. This, more than anything else, explains why South African education, viewed in the mass, is so devastatingly bad. Because the link between language, culture, science and technology has not been explored in depth in regard to the

indigenous languages, we are faced with a situation where our children have to acquire the concepts in this vital area almost entirely via what is in every respect a foreign language (usually English) for them. Since they do not live in an English environment normally, there is no spontaneous reinforcement of that which they learn (by rote) in their classrooms. Add to this the fact that their general environment is devoid of print stimuli and of a natural-science culture, and it becomes crystal clear why it is that despite millions of Rands of investment in second-language English programmes, progress in these fields is discouragingly slow.

Prospects

Although the processes by which we have arrived in the present period of transition are very important for the understanding of some of the contradictions and tensions that characterize the situation, we have to forego a discussion of these. Suffice it to say that South Africa is in the grip of a painful transition from an undemocratic and oppressive past to a more hopeful democratic dispensation. As in all other social domains, radical policy and practical interventions are being undertaken in the domain of language policy in order to smooth this transition. On paper, we have one the most progressive language dispensations in the world today. The constitution guarantees complete equality of rights for the 11 official languages and an independent statutory body, the Pan South African Language Board, and its affiliated structures have been established specifically to see to it that the constitutional and legislative provisions are adhered to by all organs of state. The Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology is the line function department for all matters pertaining to language and under it it has the National Language Services, which has to provide all services required by any department of state.

Without going into detail, it can be said that partly because of the Afrikaner obsession with the language question and because of the nature of the compromise that led to the negotiated settlement, the legal and institutional infrastructure exists in order to promote the development and 'equal usage' of the official languages and, in the educational sector, even of SASL. The reality is very different. With very few exceptions, the tendency towards (English) unilingual government has been strengthened and the Board finds itself fighting rearguard actions on behalf of a few individuals and groups. It keeps coming up against the argument of

cost-effectiveness and does not have any legislative backing for insisting on alternative approaches. At this very moment, the PANSALB is getting ready to take the SABC to court for reducing even further the TV time for the marginalized languages, including Afrikaans. It has recently found that the Post Office is in breach of the Constitution because it has its signs in English only in most urban areas of the country. Moreover, the Board is in the process of setting up lexicographic units for each of the 11 official languages. These units have set themselves the task as a priority of developing comprehensive monolingual explanatory dictionaries and are being assisted and trained, paradoxically, by the Afrikaans lexicographic unit (the *Woordeboek van die Afrikaanse Taal*) which has a wealth of experience. Five of nine Provincial Language Committees are already functioning. Each of these has to see to it, among other things, that the relevant provincial government is carrying out the constitutional provisions relating to the official languages in the province. Legislation has been agreed to for the setting up of 'language bodies', each of which has the responsibility of inspiring the speakers/users of the language concerned to write and develop the language in all domains. These are, naturally, hopeful signs but they also indicate the nature of the struggles that lie ahead of the people who are trying to improve the status and functionality of the low-status languages.

In education specifically, the situation is equally desperate. Beyond the junior primary school, as indicated already, there is hardly any L1-medium education except for the plus-minus 20% who are either English- or Afrikaans-speaking at home. Even for Afrikaans speakers, the situation is becoming worse and many children tend to go to English-medium schools or classes. This tendency is the result of uninformed choices made by parents with extremely negative attitudes to African languages and because, hitherto, government has done very little in practice to promote L1-medium education. The new Minister of Education, however, has gone on record publicly in favour of L1-medium education and an additive (as opposed to the existing subtractive) approach to multilingual education. An important idea, raised by professor Keith Chick, that was canvassed at a conference in Durban in July 1999, is that we may have to look at the possibility of interpreting the constitutional provision in terms of which the individual parent (or learner) has the right to choose the language of learning and teaching in such a way that it does not imply necessarily the right to choose the technical didactic means by which that right is realized in practice. A few projects exist where the problems that come up in the implementation of such programmes are being studied and numerous

interventions are being promoted in order to change the manner in which teachers are (not) being trained at colleges and in university faculties of education to deal with what is becoming the (typical, urban) multilingual classroom. The crucial step that has to be taken is for colleges and faculties to agree to implement what is there on paper already, i.e. to train prospective teachers to be able to teach in at least two languages. This will give the system a push in the direction of dual-medium education which, in the view of many of us, is a necessary transitional strategy in South African schools in respect of language medium policy for the simple reason that as long as English remains the language of power, people will and should want to have their children acquire proficiency in that language but, on the other side, given what we know about the history of language policy in the rest of Africa - and elsewhere - we ought to develop the indigenous languages as deeply and widely as possible to serve as languages of tuition at all levels of the educational system. This is the real test of empowerment and, therefore, one of the litmus tests of the democratization of the system. For, as long as people have to use a second, or even a foreign, language to access their most basic and routine daily requirements, democracy will remain an aspiration rather than a reality. The same holds true for the noble idea of the 'African Renaissance'. Without the full development of the African languages, this programme will remain foreign and elitist, at a great distance from ordinary African people.

Concluding remarks

In conclusion, it ought to be clear from what I have said hitherto that a series of language planning steps is necessary in order to ensure that the theoretically unchallengeable policy positions of the new South Africa are realized.

At the level of status planning, some of the steps that could be undertaken would include large-scale generalized critical language awareness campaigns which should be initiated over the next five to ten years, so that the black people in particular can begin to understand the linkages between language and power. Besides these campaigns, specific local and regional actions to enhance the value, visibility and status of the African languages are essential. For example, the use of multilingual (or bilingual) signposts and name boards for all government buildings, roads, etc. The requirement that knowledge of an African language would be a

recommendation for a post in the civil service since a large proportion of the clientele prefer service in one or other African language, would do a great deal to empower these languages and their speakers. It is also a 'natural' affirmative action policy, one which avoids the unnecessary allegation of 'reverse racism'. Government and other dignitaries should be encouraged to use the African languages for high-profile announcements of national or international significance. Needless to say, there are many more initiatives which, at relatively little cost, would raise the status of the low-status languages of South Africa.

In regard to corpus planning, besides the usual technical initiatives around dictionaries, glossaries, technical registers, etc., it would be exceptionally important that interpreters, translators, journalists and media practitioners as well as teachers are trained on a large scale. Besides the job-creating potential of these processes, they will establish and consolidate the infrastructure, or the hardware, of a multilingual society and will enable smooth communication in all directions. Major translation programmes into the local languages of the most important works of world literature and science should be started. At the same time, ways and means have to be found to encourage the writing and publication of creative literature in the low-status languages. Initiatives being undertaken in this direction by the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology are supported by all language practitioners and are bound to produce some positive results. In this connection, networks between writers, teachers, researchers and other language professionals with their counterparts in other African countries are essential and, of course, completely in line with the strategy of promoting the 'African Renaissance'. Existing networks, of which there are a few important ones, have to be strengthened systematically. Something like the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages, adapted to African conditions and building on the existing facilities of the Organization of African Unity, would quickly give direction and momentum to the rehabilitation and promotion of the indigenous languages of the African continent.

Above all, the linkage between these languages and economic development have to be made in a systematically planned manner. Rewarding people for their knowledge of African languages, used as analytical instruments, will restore the balance nationally, continentally and eventually internationally, between the relevant local and the global languages. Research in this direction is being designed in South Africa and it is to be hoped that some far-seeing private-sector interests will help to ensure that it gets off the drawing board. Paradoxically, I expect that

Afrikaans business interests will seize the opportunity first. The languages of South Africa, with the exception of those we label 'endangered', will continue to display their vitality. The challenge we face is, clearly, to enhance their status and their functionality as integral elements of an ensemble of languages bound together in a single system of national communication which is itself linked into the global system by means of English mainly, the international language that has come to be hegemonic in southern Africa.

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